Snapchat: The good, the bad and the ugly.

Ah the wonderful world of social media. What would our generation be without it honestly? Almost every single person you come across today under the age of 21 has some sort of social media. Whether it be twitter, Instagram, facebook, these are all huge internet sites that have had an extreme impact on the way we go about our everyday lives. Although there is one social media that intrigues me the most and it is actually fairly new, Snapchat. Racking in over 200 million users snapchat has easily become one of the most used social medias in recent years (Xlisatullyx, 1). Snapchat is an app used on smart phones that allows people to send pictures for up to ten seconds to someone else with the app and then they disappear “forever.” Dating back to snapchats initial release date, September of 2011, snapchat had already sent over one billion pictures by November of 2012. (Smith 1) Since then snapchat has come out with a plethora of new features like filters and stories which has only made the popularity of the app grow larger through the years. “Snapchat was initially created as a visual-texting app that would automatically delete a snap once your friend viewed it. In that way, its popularity mimics communication in the real world. You know, back when people were simply content to have a conversation without sharing it to the world. The intimacy of a private moment shared between a small number of people is what Snapchat has built its popularity around.”

The number of snapchat stories viewed per day is now at 1 billion and there is an average of about 9,000 snaps sent per second according to statistics (Smith 1) Dating back to March 26th of 2015, there was a total of 100 million daily active users which has most likely only grown since these new features have been offered. (Smith 1) Snapchat popularity is prevalent there is no doubt about that, but the real question is, is snapchat caused more good or causing more bad in relationships?

As soon as snapchat was released it soon received a lot of criticism saying that the app was created for the use of sexting. Some were outraged and some were worried that this was true and quickly started putting their own relationships in jeopardy. “When we first heard about Snapchat, the photo-sharing app that lets you set how long the recipient can view a picture for, we immediately thought that it must be used for sexting,” is a quote from an article written by Megan Dickey that talks about snapchat and its use of sexting. (Dickey, 1) With the rumors of snapchat being used for sexting quickly filling the media air waves, relationships were soon put to the test. The best part about this situation is that snapchat came along with a special feature that allowed you to see your list of friends, “bestfriends.” What this meant is that whoever your friends were snapchatting the most often would then show up under their user name telling their friends that those were the people they were snapchatting most frequently. From what I witnessed from my friends and their experiences and my own personally experiences as well, this caused A LOT of problems in relationships. Let’s say your boyfriend has another girl as his bestfriend or vice versa, what are they snapping about? What kind of pictures are they sending each other? That was the question many significant others started to wonder whenever they saw a member of the opposite on their significant others bestfriend lists. One of the main reasons why this caused so many problems was because there was absolutely no proof to prove that what their significant other said the pictures were about was true. Throughout the years there has been plenty of research and statistics found about what people are actually snapchatting about and whether or not this app actually causes problems or not.

Although snapchat went through with deleting the best friend feature on snapchat, not allowing anyone from your friend list to see who you were snapchatting most frequently on January 27, 2015. (Hooton) This caused a lot of panic for those people who were dependent on the snapchat best friend feature to see who their significant other was snapchatting most frequently and started causing a lot of trust issues. This then sparked a lot of controversy on other social medias like twitter and facebook with a lot of people stating “If your honestly worried because you can’t see your bf/gf snapchat best friends why are you even in that relationship.” (Hooton 1) Which then caused a lot of people to feel the need to defend themselves in stating that it’s not that they don’t trust their significant other it was just the fact that snapchat now made it easier to participate in suspicious behavior. So the real question I’m trying to figure out is, is snapchat really an app that causes problems within relationships like the media promotes? Or is it just simple an app that allows you to keep in contact with you friends by sending funny and random pictures.

**Methods and Findings**

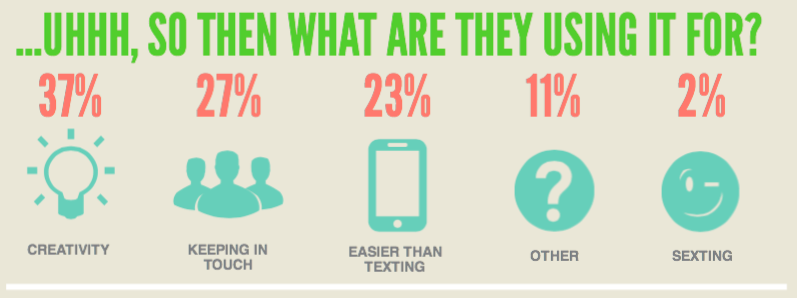
“Here’s the biggest issue at hand: once you are actually dating or in a relationship with someone, and they send you a snap, how do you know whether that snap was intended just for you or if it was sent to the entire world? And the answer is: you have no freakin’ idea, whatsoever.” (Hayman, 1) That quote is exactly the thing I am talking when it comes to snapchat and the reasons it causes problems in relationships. Online you can find multiple articles relating back to this exact same problem as well, it is not just one or two people. With that being said I decided to further my research and create some data of my own.

To collect my own personal data, I created an 8 question survey that asked questions about the participant’s views on snapchat and their opinions on the impact it has on relationships. Since I am a college student at Central Michigan University, I thought it would be a good idea if I walked around campus and asked all different kinds of people to take my survey making sure it was random and unbiased. The first question I asked on my survey was if the person I had given the survey to had a snapchat. Out of the 45 responses I received on my survey, all 45 of the participants answered yes to this question. This makes them part of the 77% of college students that use snapchat on a regular daily basis. (Wagner 1) I could safely assume almost anyone on a college campus knows what snapchat is even if they did not personally have one considering its popularity among the young adult population, so I know when randomly choosing my participants that most likely every one would have some sort of prior knowledge about snapchat. The next question I asked on my survey dived right into the issue that I am focusing my research on and I asked the participants if they were involved in a romantic relationship. Out of the 45 participants again, 19 of them answered yes they were involved in a romantic relationships and 26 reported no they were single. Now I was happy with these results just for the solid fact that this gave me a wide variety of single and taken participants that would answer the rest of the survey questions with two different perspectives. My next question I asked was geared towards those 19 people that answered yes to being involved in a romantic relationship in which I asked them if their significant other had a snapchat. All 19 taken participants answered yes to this question making their significant others also apart of that 77% of college students that used snapchat on a regular basis as well. I thought this question was important to ask because it would then could possibly lead to different answers later on in my survey when I begin to talk about the negative effect that snapchat has on relationships. So with all 19 of those participants aware that their significant other had a snapchat I could then test and see if snapchat is causing problems for them now even in 2016, an entire year after the best friend feature had been removed from the app.

After getting those basic questions out of the way that allowed me to get a better back ground on the kind of participants I was surveying I then went on to the more important questions that would allow me to get in depth answers on what my participants thought when it came to the problems snapchat causes in romantic relationships. My next question was vague and to the point in which I asked if my participants thought that snapchat causes problems within relationships. I gave my participants 4 different options for this question allowing them to answer all the time, often, sometimes or never. Out of the 45 participants, 7 answered all the time, 14 answered often, 22 answered sometimes and 2 answered never. This goes to show that even when involved in a relationship or not the majority of the participants said that snapchat at least caused problems in relationships even if it was just sometimes. After having that information, I then asked the participants if snapchat had ever caused any problems for them personally, present or the past. Given the same 4 options as the previous question, 2 answered all the time, 25 answered often, 16 answered sometimes and 2 answered never. Once again you see that by the way these questions are answered that there must clearly be some correlation or thought in the participants’ opinions that snapchat causes some sort of negative problems in romantic relationships, with 95% of the participants answering these questions with a sometimes or above each time they were asked.

After I had figured out the background of the survey takers, and then asked some more in depth questions about snapchat and their own personally experience with snapchat and their personal relationships I then went on the the question I had been most interested to see the results. My next question was if they thought that the best friend addition on snapchat caused problems between couples. Given the same 4 options 15 people said all the time, 19 people said often, 11 people said sometimes and 0 people said never. This outcome made me wonder if snapchat the app itself was the problem or if the best friend feature and the fear of the unknown was actually causing the issue instead. My last question allowed for some written responses so that the participants could explain their reasoning’s and to help me better understand their answers. The last question that my survey asked was if snapchat should bring back the best friend feature. 24 answered yes while the other 21 answered no. This was very interesting to me because seeing the participants’ answers were split almost directly down the middle I was anxious to see what their reasoning were for their answer. On an online poll as well when asked if snapchat should bring back the bestfriends list 65% said no. (Le Duc 1) One of the participants who answered no when asked why stated, “If relationships are strained due to an addition on snapchat than that relationship needs to be re-evaluated.” This relates back what I said earlier in the introduction on the controversy about the best friend feature being removed from snapchat. Another participant who answered yes when why stated, “It’s nice to be able to have the proof of who your friends are snapchatting, if you have nothing to hide then there shouldn’t be a problem reinstating the best friend feature.” After collecting this data, I came to the conclusion that a big majority of people, or assuming so through the sample I received and the research done so far, think that snapchat causes relationship problems especially when the best friend feature is involved. Although there is a lot of controversy on the debate of whether or not the best friend feature should be reinstating, I don’t think anyone would actually be mad if it was if they weren’t using snapchat to participate in suspicious behavior. I’m going to now go into more of a discussion on snapchat, its effects and whether or not it truly is a source for problems in romantic relationships.

**Discussion**

After gathering the data and doing a lot of research on the topic of whether or not snapchat causes negative effects on relationships I have found out a lot more about this topic then I did before I begun this research. "When I asked teenagers about Snapchat late last summer, I heard again and again that they liked it because the ephemeral nature of the content allowed them to be themselves – to share a weird or ugly or banal picture that they would have been uncomfortable posting on other well-known social networks for fear of getting dissed.” (Dredge 1) That quote is from an article that defends snapchat in this sense that it is not used for just sexting and sending risky messages that other people can not see, but it is actually shown through statistics that sexting is the least popular form of snapchatting. (Freier 1)

With that being said then why is it that everyone assumes that snapchat is used for this kind of activity with no proof? In a scholarly article I found one of the co-founders of snapchat, Evan Speigel, said, “People are living with this massive burden of managing a digital version of themselves… it’s taken all of the fun out of communicating. The application gives users a strong sense of inconsequentiality to their actions, enabling them to take the ugliest, silliest, most compromising photos they want.” (Nicole 1) With all of these findings it is safe to say that the creators of snapchat did not create snapchat with the hopes of it becoming some sort of sexting app but instead an app of originality where people can feel free to be themselves, in which the media has corrupted into the minds of young adults.

The real question here now is, is it actually snapchat causing problems in romantic relationships or is it our generation today’s trust issues with the growing popularity of social media in general? Social media is a huge staple in almost everyone’s daily lives and something our society thrives on not only for communicating but for business, personal, professional and sharing purposes. “Social media and technology combined are slowly becoming the number one cause of problems and arguments in relationships. It’s no coincidence that I received so many messages that were about the element of “jealousy”.” (The Impact 1) This quote comes from an article that explains all the different reasons why social media ruins relationships. One of the main reasons being is jealousy, something that comes along with almost every relationship. Why is my boyfriend talking to this person or why does my boyfriend spend more time with her than me? Jealously has always been a problem with relationships but when social media gets involved, it takes it to a whole new level. Take Instagram and facebook for example, it allows a person to post something and for anyone to like or comment on it. There is no way to control who is liking or messaging your significant other on these social media sites and that adds to a lot of problems in relationships. Especially when people begin to get bored or get a wandering eye away from their significant other is when social media starts to play a big role in relationship issues and cheating. “Of 2,400 American adults that have admitted to cheating at least once this past year, [a recent study](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/new-cheat-secret-social-media-accounts-article-1.1262908) found that one-third of these adults have created a [social media](http://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/) or email account that their partner didn’t know existed.” (Bea 1) When things like this get out into the media and the public eye it puts almost everyone in a relationship in a spot to wonder whether or not their significant other is apart of that number. I think social media makes cheating a lot easier than it ever has been in the past and it’s definitely causing a negative impact on todays relationships as a whole.

So how does this all relate back to snapchat and the negative effects it causes between significant others? I think the main reason why snapchat is so hated by almost everyone in relationships is how easy it is to make unwanted things disappear and the fear of the unknown. At least on facebook and Instagram you can see who is liking and commenting on everyone’s pictures, of course that is if your significant other does not have a secret facebook. On snapchat there is no way to see who is snapping who, especially since they removed the best friend feature, and there is absolutely no way to see what pictures were sent or received. So here is what I think a good solution for this problem with snapchat could be. After collecting my data and reading more and more data collected by other researchers as well, I think brining back the best friend feature is beneficial for every one involved. I think this way because then people can see who their significant other is snapchatting and not have to wonder who they are sending pictures to most frequently, while those who are using snapchat to send those rare risky snaps to the wrong person will then have to second guess sending it because of others being allowed to see who they are snapchatting. I think bringing this feature back will cut out some trust issues that revolve around the unknown of snapchat and allows significant others to feel more comfortable with each other having a snap chat and especially when they know what they are using it for. Like the argument said if your relationship is in turmoil because the best friend feature was removed then you have other to reevaluate your relationship. But it goes for both ways here, if your relationship is in turmoil because the best friend feature is going to come back to snapchat then maybe that person should reevaluate how they are treating their significant other and their involvement in their relationship.

No matter what happens with social media and the way it is portrayed there is always going to be issues that stem from the usage of it, especially in romantic relationships. Although there are ways that can make these issues a little else prevalent and less crucial to the state of a relationship. Trust issues in relationships are always going to be prevalent and something that is never going to be put to a complete end due to the fact that their will always be cheaters, lying and suspicious behavior with or without social media. Although with social media I think there are many solutions that would make it a lot lesser of a problem, like bringing the best friend feature back, that will allow for relationships today to have a more stable foundation of trust. So my last question is, if the best friend feature came back today, would you be okay with people seeing who your bestfriends are?

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**This website was my main source of information collected because of its high level of data and statistics that made my research on this paper a lot easier. This website contains over 70 different statistics about snapchat and allowed me to really explore and get numbers that I needed to properly write about this topic.**

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